

The Secretary of State presents his compliments to their Excellencies and Messieurs and Mesdames the Chiefs of Mission and has the honor to announce the official commencement of the In-person Registration Program for domestic workers employed by foreign mission members. This program was previewed by the Chief of Protocol on June 18, 2015, at a briefing on the employment of domestic workers. The initial phase of this registration program only pertains to A-3 visa holders employed by bilateral missions in the Washington, D.C. area. The program will be expanded at a future date to include domestic workers employed in locations throughout the United States.

The registration program will commence effective immediately with domestic workers employed by mission members who arrived in the Washington, D.C. area as of September 1, 2015. Representatives of the Office of the Chief of Protocol will contact appropriate embassies to schedule appointments for domestic workers holding A-3 visas. The program will subsequently expand to include A-3 visa holders previously registered and residing in the Washington, D.C. area prior to September 1, 2015; embassies will be individually notified of the requirement to schedule appointments.

Additionally, effective November 1, 2015, embassies should notify the Department of the arrival of domestic workers by completing and submitting via email a Notification of Arrival (NOA) form to DomesticWorkers@state.gov . The NOA form is available on the Office of the Chief of Protocol's website (www.state.gov/protocol) and should be transmitted to the Department within five days of the worker's arrival into the United States. Upon receipt of the NOA form, the Office of the Chief of Protocol will contact the embassy to schedule a registration appointment. Appointments will take place within 30 days of a domestic worker's arrival into the United States, and subsequently on an annual basis for the duration of the domestic worker's employment by the mission member. Please note that domestic workers will be issued a registration card that will then be renewed at the time of the worker's annual registration appointment. Additional information about the registration card will be available on the Office of the Chief of Protocol's website.

All appointment schedules and queries concerning the In-person Registration Program will be handled through the previously designated embassy point of contact with responsibility for domestic worker matters. This policy is intended to assist both the Department and missions in ensuring compliance with program requirements. Embassies are requested to inform the Office of the Chief of Protocol in a timely manner if there are changes to their designated point of contact for domestic worker matters.

For its record keeping purposes, the Office of the Chief of Protocol will track annual registration renewal dates. However, please note that it may be of benefit for embassies to develop an internal system to monitor renewal requirements. Similarly, it may prove beneficial for embassies to keep track of sponsorship of domestic workers, maintain copies of employment contracts, and have the ability to access payment records should any disputes arise between a mission member and a domestic worker.

In-person registration appointments will be held at the Office of the Chief of Protocol located at 3507 International Place, NW, Washington, D.C., where the domestic worker will be met in the building lobby by a Protocol Officer. Interpretation services will be available for all registrants that require them.

At the registration appointment the domestic worker should present his or her passport, a copy of the employment contract, and documentation confirming that a U.S. bank account has been established in his or her name only. As notified at the June 2015 information session, mission members must begin paying their domestic workers by check or electronic fund transfer within 30 days of the domestic worker's arrival into the United States. If a U.S. bank account has not yet been opened at the time of the registration appointment, the domestic worker will be required to return to the Office of the Chief of Protocol at a later date to provide the requested information relating to the establishment of an account.

The Department recognizes that as this new program is initiated missions may have questions related to program and process details. For this reason, representatives of the Office of the Chief of Protocol are available to respond to queries and provide support for a successful partnership with the Diplomatic Corps on matters relating to the employment of domestic workers. Questions may be directed to DomesticWorkers@state.gov .

The Department and the diplomatic community share a common goal in this endeavor, which includes furthering collaboration in the obligation to protect foreign domestic workers brought to the United States to work for foreign mission personnel. It is important to continue joint efforts to ensure that all domestic workers understand their rights and protections, and that those employing these workers understand their contractual obligations and responsibilities.

Department of State,

Washington, October 21, 2015.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'S' with a vertical line through it, and a horizontal line extending to the right.